

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Congressman Jeff Fortenberry today issued the following statement concerning Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's decision to remain in office:

"Frankly, I am surprised by President Mubarak's adamant decision to remain in power. Given the current political realities, I did not think it would have been workable for him to continue as President. I am concerned that President Mubarak's tone does not create the necessary space to diminish the current tensions and for the march toward orderly transition to take place. I also fear this puts the military in a difficult and awkward position.

"I am deeply concerned about the stability of Egypt. The key pillars of democracy are respect for human rights and the rule of law, and both the government and Egyptian citizens must firmly embrace these tenets. But there must be mutual support and respect for institutions and institutional processes - rather than individual power - to lay the foundation for holding peace and serving as an ongoing moderating force in North Africa and the Middle East."

Fortenberry, who lived near Tahrir Square in Cairo, is the Vice Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee with jurisdiction over Africa, and a member of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia.

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